

Summary of CBM Hydrology Task Group Meeting

8/20/03

BLM-Buffalo Field Office

(Notes taken by Andy Bobst, BLM-Miles City)

Participants:

Andy Bobst, BLM-Miles City, MT

Rick Huber, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Gene Onacko Jr., BIA-Billings, MT

Mike McKinley, BLM-Buffalo, WY

Paul Beels, BLM-Buffalo, WY

John Lambing, USGS-Helena, MT

Dan Hengel, WY-DEQ

Richard Zander, BLM-Buffalo, WY

Todd Parfitt, WY-DEQ

Proceedings (an agenda is attached):

0900 – Introductions and start of meeting

Paul Beels provided an overview of where this group fits in with the overall Interagency Working Group concept.

An aquatics group is being considered separate from the Hydrology group

Tasks

Andy Bobst provided an overview of the tasks that this group has been assigned in the Charter.

- Develop a surface water monitoring plan using existing monitoring as a starting point. Consider the USGS/EPA “Conceptual Plan for Long-Term Monitoring of Surface Water in the Tongue River and Powder River basins of Wyoming and Montana” as direction for where to go from here (needs to be reviewed and finalized)
- Develop a groundwater monitoring plan built off of existing monitoring.
- Prepare a list of ongoing studies and provide recommendations on additional studies that are needed.
- Function as a forum to assist in the development of TMDLs.

TMDLs

A discussion of the TMDL process followed, with the WY-DEQ taking the lead. It was noted that the MT-DEQ was not present, therefore all conclusions were tentative.

- TMDL stakeholder meetings are scheduled for September 4th, and 25th.
- Dan has the TMDL model, however he has not yet reviewed it in detail, no one else has seen it.
- A link to the TMDL website should be established on the WY-BLM Buffalo Field Office CBM clearinghouse website once the MT-DEQ site is up.

- A ruling from the 9th circuit court of appeals came out recently. No copies have been obtained yet since it was marked “not for publication”. No one is sure why it would not be for publication. Apparently the requirement for developing TMDLs for all streams listed on the 1996 list has been vacated such that now TMDLs must be developed all streams currently identified as impaired. (*We have now gotten a copy of this ruling. It states that the district court did abuse its discretion by ordering that failures to meet the deadlines would constitute final agency action, and in refusing to permit modification to the 1996 list. ALB 9/2/03*). Therefore the most recent information can be used, and the list modified. The current list is the 2002 list, and another will come out in April of 2004.
 - Will this ruling effect the timing of the development of TMDLs on the Powder River since it is not listed on the 2002 list? We will need to ask Pete Schade (MT-DEQ) at the TMDL meeting on the 4th.
- Phase 1 TMDL Documents are available on the internet at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ppa/mdm/TMDL/TonguePowderRosebudTMDL.asp>
- Dan and Andy will work to serve as intermediaries between the hydro task group and the TMDL modeling group.
- The MT Surface water standards have been approved by EPA Region 8. Now they need to get approval from D.C.
- The DEQs are working to coordinate on the data used as ambient in the Powder River, and other data to maintain standards in the Powder River with Wyoming’s narrative standards. It is not likely that Wyoming will adopt numeric standards, however an SAR of 6 and an EC between 2000 and 2500 is now being used as a guideline for narrative permitting. WY-DEQ needs to work out with MT-DEQ how to use the mean monthly standards for EC and SAR with the 7Q10 flows required by the permitting process.
- Currently WDEQ allows only limited CBNG discharge to the Powder River, and no CBNG discharge to the Tongue River, in order to stay in line with the interstate agreement, even though this has expired.

A concern is the effect of CBNG on shallow groundwater (*I do not think this has to do with TMDLs, however this is where it came up. ALB*). Need to look at alluvium, infiltration on scoria, on-drainage impoundments, and the resurfacing of groundwater. There is concern that on drainage impoundments will limit fish migration and effect spawning. WY-DEQ and WGFD will try to coordinate more closely on on-drainage impoundments. WY-DEQ may require that off drainage impoundments that do not meet their siting guidelines will need to install monitoring wells.

- Every Wyoming permit is on the internet
- WY-BLM is requiring industry to give them development plans for the next year each November
- WY-DEQ is asking for 3 year plans

The WY-BLM clearing house website should have maps available soon with available data geo-referenced.

The Wyoming Oil and Gas commission also has a clearinghouse website.

USGS/EPA Surface Water Sampling Plan

Currently have a draft plan that needs to be reviewed, modified and finalized (Draft-Conceptual Plan for Long-Term Monitoring of Surface Water in the Tongue River and Powder River basins of Wyoming and Montana).

This is a design for long term monitoring. The reason that the EPA funded this project was to have the data on hand to answer basic questions and give long term trends.

The current document is just a guidance document. It does not address funding, irrigation, groundwater effects, or ephemeral drainages.

This document is a one time deal.

The group discussed adopting the USGS report as a framework for regional surface water monitoring on the Tongue and Powder Rivers. This will be a likely outcome, however we will first need to review and comment on the draft, and then wait to see what the final looks like. The draft document should be forwarded on to the next level up from this group for further consideration.

NPDES Permit Monitoring Requirements

Require monitoring at the point of discharge (end of pipe). DEQ has quality information while Oil and Gas have best quantity information.

WY-DEQ information may not be in a useable format. There could be enforcement problems with making the data public.

Permitted discharges are significantly greater than actual discharges, therefore we must be quite conservative when using monitoring data to assess the volume that can be discharged.

Some supplementary studies will be needed on irrigation, and interactions between surface waters and groundwater.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Decided to discuss database options after groundwater is discussed. Therefore re-arranged agenda.

Groundwater Monitoring Programs

Wyoming BLM is going to have industry install 85 new nest locations over the next 2 years.

Montana has ~130 CBNG regional monitoring wells, with another group to be drilled by MBMG along the state line.

CBNG operators need to submit a monitoring report to MBOGC to show what water levels are doing in field.

How do we deal with monitoring on-drainage impoundments?
Mike will write up a statement of concern about on-drainage impoundments.
Monitoring of alluvium should include water levels and major ions.

Database Options

Clearinghouse style?

Have MT use the WY-BLM clearinghouse? (<http://www.cbmclearinghouse.info/>)

This data should be able to be viewed on a single map.

- Groundwater Monitoring
- Surface Water Monitoring
- Wildlife
- Aquatics
- Air
- Etc. Etc.

We will need a GIS person to discuss this (*it is on the agenda for the IWG*)

Have MT-BLM add \$ to the existing project rather than starting something new?

Other Topics

We will need a soils person to discuss land application/irrigation with CBNG water.

Perhaps: George Vance
 Robert Mitchell
 Arnie Irwin

We should have a study of the cost of different water management options done. This should start with the DOE and EPA studies already completed, however it should also include the remediation and reclamation costs. Also include option to inject into already constructed CBNG wells in the areas of the basin where the gas has been extracted (near Gillette?).

WY-BLM is planning to bond for the full cost of reclamation for impoundments.

Will need \$ for: Surface Water Monitoring stations
 Database coordination
 Water Management cost study

Rich Huber will be representative at the next level for the Hydrology group since he is planning to attend already as representative for the WY-Game and Fish Dept.

We will attempt to have most future meeting via teleconference to save on travel costs and time.

We would also like to get representatives from the Tribes, MBOGC, WOGCC, MT-Fish Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Corps of Engineers, MT-DEQ, EPA, and MBMG.

Agenda
Hydrology Task Group
Wednesday, August 20th, 2003
BLM Buffalo Field Office
Buffalo, Wyoming

- 9am Introductions
- Overview of Tasks Assigned
- Discussion of the current status of the TMDL process in MT, and what that will mean for WY, and particularly this group's work.
 - Is there anything that is needed from this group for this process to proceed more smoothly.
- Discussion of USGS Surface Water Sampling Plan for Tongue and Powder Rivers
- Discussion of Permit sampling requirements (MT-DEQ and WY-DEQ)
- Discussion of level of surface water sampling needed
 - Will regional plan plus site specific monitoring related to permitting be adequate to track effects.
- CBM Database Options (Where will the info live)
 - Can it live in many places and just be accessed by a central site?
- Groundwater Monitoring Programs (monitoring of drawdown)
 - What is there in both states
 - What is planned
 - What else (if anything) is needed
- Who will pay for what: How do we get the needed programs going?
- Other topics as needed
- Determine next meeting place, time, and topics.
- 5pm Meeting Closeout

Breaks and lunch will be inserted into the schedule as appropriate.